

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 08568 091739Z

ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 PM-03 ISO-00 SS-14 SP-02 L-01 INR-05 EB-04

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-----015293 091759Z /42

P 090854Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7463

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 8568

STADIS////////////////////////////////

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, MPOL, PEPR, MY

SUBJECT: FY 78 SECURITY ASSISTANCE LEVEL FOR MALAYSIA

REF: A) STATE 198170, B) KUALA LUMPUR 7437, C) KUALA LUMPUR 7386,
D) KUALA LUMPUR 5386

1. AS DEPT. IS AWARE, GOM HAS BEEN APPRISED OF
AVAILABILITY OF US\$20 MILLION IN FMS CREDITS FOR
FY-1978, HAS INDICATED ITS INTENTION TO CONCLUDE A
FINANCING AGREEMENT, AND HAS PRESENTED US WITH A LIST
OF "PROBABLY" PURCHASES UNDER FY 78 FMS FINANCING
(REF D).

2. ALTHOUGH WE REGRET THAT WE WILL HAVE TO INFORM THE
MALAYSIANS OF THE \$3.5 MILLION REDUCTION, WE DO NOT
BELIEVE THIS WILL HAVE SERIOUS MILITARY PROCUREMENT
CONSEQUENCES PER SE, PARTICULARLY SINCE THEY APPARENTLY
ARE STILL IN THE PROCESS OF FINALIZING THEIR PRIORITIES
FOR PURCHASES UNDER THE FY 78 PROGRAM. WE LOOK FORWARD
TO EARLY RECEIPT OF TALKING POINTS PROMISED REF A
SO THAT WE CAN ADVISE THEM OF THE REDUCTION AS SOON
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PAGE 02 KUALA 08568 091739Z

AS POSSIBLE. IT WOULD BE EMBARRASSING TO GO BACK
TO THEM AFTER RECEIPT OF A "FINAL" LIST OF ITEMS
FOR FY 78.

3. WE DO NOT SEE THAT THIS DECISION AFFECTS OUR
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FY 80 AS CONTAINED IN REF B.
WE DO NOT RPT NOT CONCUR WITH PARA 3 REF A "ASSUMPTION"

THAT FY 80 WILL BEGIN A PHASE OUT OF FMS CREDITS TO MALAYSIA. ON THE CONTRARY, AS WE NOTED IN PARA 11 OF REF C, A MODEST YET VISIBLE FMS CREDIT RELATIONSHIP SIGNIFICANTLY PROMOTES OUR BILATERAL POLITICAL AND SECURITY INTERESTS IN MALAYSIA AND SUPPORTS OUR OVERALL REGIONAL OBJECTIVES AS WELL. TERMINATION OF THIS PROGRAM WOULD UNDERMINE OUR POSITION AS A RELIABLE SOURCE OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND REDUCE OUR INFLUENCE WITH KEY MILITARY AND OTHER LEADERS HERE, AND MIGHT WELL BE TAKEN BY THE RECENTLY RE-ELECTED MALAYSIAN LEADERSHIP AS A SIGN OF DEPARTURE FROM OUR STATED POLICY OF MAINTAINING A SIGNIFICANT US PRESENCE AND INTEREST IN THE REGION. MOREOVER, WHILE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ASEAN IS NOT A MILITARY ONE, OUR ACTIONS WITH REGARD TO OUR BILATERAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WITH ONE COUNTRY ARE CERTAIN TO HAVE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL IMPACT ON OTHER ASEAN STATES AS WELL AS ON ASEAN'S OVERALL PERCEPTION OF US INTENTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, GOM LEADERS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS HAVE URGED US TO BE RESPONSIVE TO THAILAND'S AND INDONESIA'S SECURITY ASSISTANCE REQUESTS; WE BELIEVE SINGAPORE AND INDONESIA ARE SIMILARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THAILAND AND ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO OUR PROGRAM IN MALAYSIA AS WELL.

4. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE FUNDING AT THE "BASIC"
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PAGE 03 KUALA 08568 091739Z

LEVELS NOTED IN REF B IS WARRANTED IN ORDER TO
SUSTAIN THESE BASIC POLITICAL AND SECURITY OBJECTIVES.
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